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ABSTRACT

This study reveals that John Dewey and his theory of education had an influence on the beginning of progressive education in Eretz Israel in the first and second decades of this century, even before it had influenced the kibbutz educational system--the communal way of life, and other schools in the Jewish labor movement in Israel. This influence occurred when a small group of educators, attracted to the atmosphere of the new education, wished to turn it into the educational system of the Jewish National Revival movement in Israel in the years 1915-1925. The members of this group established a number of "active schools" (the Hebrew term for progressive schools), formulated pedagogic principles that they considered suitable to the needs of an emerging society, and even joined forces with the labor movement. The bulk of this paper describes the philosophy, principles, and practices of the school in Har-Tuv (1915-1916) and the Active School (1921-1923). (Author/DCS)

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JOHN DEWEY'S INFLUENCE ON PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN ISRAEL DURING THE YEARS 1915-1925

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John Dewey's Influence on Progressive Education in Israel During the Years 1915-1925

Historians tend to agree that very few educationalists have influenced the moulding of educational philosophy and practice throughout the world in this century - as did John Dewey. However, there is only a partial agreement as to whether Dewey's reputation stands in proportion to the scope of his influence. Among the attempts that have been made to evaluate his contribution to the development of education outside of the United States - it is worthwhile to mention those of L. Kandel[1], William W. Brickman[2], and A. Harry Passow[3].

Brickman presents the difficulty of evaluating Dewey's influence,[4] and suggests to measure it by means of his reputation, according to the following criteria: Translations of books and articles, professional reviews, discussions of ideas in professional and other publications, and references to theory and practice in miscellaneous sources.[5] He reaches the conclusion that Dewey's actual influence was mostly felt in education in China[6]. In contrast to him, A.H. Passow explicitly speaks of Dewey's influence on societies and regimes in the world, and this according to three criteria:

1) Dewey's visits to foreign countries, most notably his visits to Japan, China, Turkey and the U.S.S.R.

2) Translations of Dewey's books and other writings into at least thirty five languages.

3) The thousands of students from other lands who studied with Dewey and his colleagues at Teachers College, Columbia University and other American Universities and colleges, where Dewey's philosophy was taught,

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and then returned home to become leaders in their countries' ministries and universities"[7].

The similarity and the difference in the evaluations of Brickman and Passow demonstrate the complexity that lies in the research of influence in educational history, which is methodologically connected to the question of the validity of this study.[8]

As far as Brickman is concerned, "To begin the process of establishing an influence one must be prepared to show, at the very least, that educator E knows the work of educator F, and that he made use of the latter's ideas in a manner that modified his own"[9].

An examination of these three elements: Knowledge, use and modification, is complicated when speaking of Dewey's influence, because Dewey's growing reputation, and the acquaintance with his ideas in the above mentioned ways, all took place at a time of significant social and political changes in the world, which created a ripe and ready ground for the absorption of modern educational ideas, and when pedagogical principles, similar to those of Dewey, were adopted and applied in various societies and regimes at one and the same time.

The period after the First World War brought about the renaissance of nations, the establishment of political regimes and the creation of new societies. They all longed to create a new type of person or citizen; one who does not passively yearn for change and redemption, but rather one who wishes to take an active part in the process of his society's revival. Progressive education was designated to bridge the gap between the accelarating social change and the pedagogical standstill, which was a result of a long period of social stability. In spite of the variety of expressions of progressive education, there was

a common basis to all of them, which was clearly formulated by Dewey at a later stage.[10]

One of the directions of this educational theory, which placed the child in the center of the educational universe,[11] was based on a social orietnation, according to which there exists an interdependence between the quality of the individual's development and the society he belongs to; between the quality of the individual's experience and that of his society; between objectives such as personal development and social efficiency. Dewey is one of the outstanding leaders of this approach, and therefrom his influence on societies that were looking for a new education which would suit their objectives and ideologies. His influence may also be attributed to an additional factor - namely, the fact the Dewistic educational approach may be subject to operative translations, and its success does not entirely depend on the educator's personal qualities , as in other progressive approaches.[12] This also explains the difference between progressive schools that remained within the limits of an educational experiment, and those which were adopted by societies and thus became educational movements[13].

This study reveals that Dewey and his theory, which was then at the stage of crystalization, had an influence on the beginning of progressive education in Eretz Israel (pre-state Israel-Palestine-hence "Israel") already in the first and second decades of the century, even before it had influenced the Kibbutz educational system - the communal way of life, and other schools in the Jewish labour movement in Israel.[14] This occurred when a small group of educators, that was influenced by the atmosphere of the new education, wished to turn it into the educational system of the Jewish National Revival movement in Israel in

the years 1915-1925. The members of this group established a number of active schools (the Hebrew term for progressive schools), formulated pedagogic principles which they considered suitable to the needs of an emerging society, and even joined forces with the labour movement.

The leaders of this group acquainted themselves with this new educational philosophy mainly by seeing it implemented in Germany. However, already at an early stage of their work, it became evident that they had adopted some of Dewey's early formulated educational elements. Later on, the leader of the group proclaimedly chose to follow Dewey's path, although his knowledge of it was not very profound. The beginning of this influence was based on the theory that was current in the educational world at the turn of the century, and which was attributed by the above group to John Dewey, according to which the process of each individual's development was parallel to the process of development of human society at large.[15] Its continuity resulted from the aspiration to turn the educational experience into an educational policy of a social movement, and from the general similarity between the social conditions under which Dewey formulated his theory, and those under which this progressive group was working in Israel: A democratic, immigrational society, striving to realize social ideals and based on the active participation of each individual member of this society in that process.

When the World War broke out the Jewish Community in Israel numbered 80,000 people. As a result of many being exiled by the Turkish authorities, at the end of the war they numbered only 50,000.

For many generations the Jewish community existed without any political, economic, cultural or social organization, while leading a rigid religious life based on the longing for redemption. At the end of

the last century a wave of pioneer-immigrants started arriving, mostly from Eastern Europe, motivated by a strong nationalistic consciousness, who wished to realize the dream of a national revival by building settlements mainly agricultural, either privately owned, semi-cooperative, or communal, such as the kibbutz. At the same time national institutions were being established, which were to represent the new social existence in Israel under the British rule, with the aid of the World Zionist Movement. In 1903 the Hebrew Teachers Association in Israel was established, and which besides dealing with professional matters, also served as the body that administered the national education and created its patterns. In 1914 a central educational committee was formed, and at the same time, the Zionist Federation undertook the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of these schools. Within a short period an educational system was set up, which, in-spite of being very small, included kindergartens, elementary schools, high-schools, and teachers' seminars. The identifying mark of these new national schools was the use of Hebrew as a learning and living language.[16] After the war, this system developed in a unique manner, and became based on three sub-systems, each one bearing reference to a political body which supervised it and determined its educational policy: The general schools, which adhered to the Liberal Political Center, Orthodox religious schools which were subordinate to the National Religious Party, and the Labour Movement Schools.[17]

In the first two decades of the century, one of the questions on the small national community agenda was : What will be the nature of these national schools? There were those who viewed the national school as a direct continuation of the traditional Jewish school in the

diaspora, while adapting it to the new conditions. Others wished to create a national school according to the model of the modern Central European elementary school and integrate Jewish and general studies within that framework. Along with these approaches, there were also sounds of the progressive educational ideas. Although there were only few spokesmen for this approach, they expressed their views from various platforms and preached to turn their approach into the educational policy of the whole revival movement. The zealous loyalty of the members of this group to that pedagogical concept, brought about many conflicts between them and their partners - the parents and representatives of society - and, as a result thereof - the abandoning of the experiment and starting it all over again. The two central personalities in this group - David Idelson and Yehuda Polany - received their training as teachers at the Teachers' Seminar in Jerusalem, which was founded by a German philanthropic society. Their acquaintance with the progressive education at work was also made in Germany. In their pedagogical circle, which began in 1915 and was terminated in 1929, there was also an internal chapter, in which Dewey's influence was greatly felt.

The School in Har-Tuv 1915-1916

The principles of the new progressive education were already known in Israel at the beginning of the century. In 1910, when there were only few national schools in existence, a journal by the name of "Education" was issued by the Teacher°s Association. During this year a number of articles dealing with progressive education were published, one of which was entitled "The Element of Work in School"[11], which included a description, an analysis and an evaluation of the theories of J. Dewey and the German educationalist J. Kirschensteiner.

The article stated that Dewey's educational philosophy was based on a theory, according to which each individual, in his course of development, follows the same biological and cultural path of the whole human race.[19] This process is characterized by the fact that manual labour constituted the essence of mankind's primary existence and as such, created the conditions for the development of civilization and human culture. The objectives which Dewey wished to achieve in his laboratory school near the University of Chicago, according to the above article were as follows: 1) To draw the school nearer to the child's life; 2) To find study material that is suitable to the child's development and which would motivate him to study; 3) To administer the instruction of reading, writing and arithmetic in a manner in which they would be based on the child's experience; 4) To develop the child's personality.[20] It is worthwhile to remember that at the time, Dewey himself was only beginning to crystalize his educational theory, and that in most cases, the acquaintance with him at this stage, was, so to speak "second hand", namely through the translation of his articles from English to other languages, mainly German. This made it difficult to profoundly understand his theory, and such appears to be the case in the conclusion that this article reaches: "Dewey does not construct his method on a profound and extensive theory, nor on a scientific study, but rather on examinations and experiments that were carried out in his school by the University of Chicago".[21] The article goes on to say that pedagogues such as Dewey and Kirschensteiner "have abandoned the traditional extremity only to enter a different extremity - when trying to attract the child to a world that is all practicality and technicality."[22]

This acquaintance with Dewey served as the basis for his influence. Several years later, during 1915-1916, in the midst of the First World War, David Idelson, who later became one of the founders and leaders of the Progressive group in Israel during the period of 1915-1929, worked as a teacher in a small agricultural village, not far from Jerusalem, named Har-Tuv. The village was populated by Jewish immigrants from Bulgaria whose long and tiring working days enabled Idelson himself to independently determine the educational policy of the school. Idelson received his training as a teacher in a seminar in Jerusalem that was directed by a German philanthropic society according to traditional educational methods. From his visits to Europe, and from reading modern pedagogical publications issued by educational innovators, he was much influenced by the new educational theories which appeared to be more suitable to his time. He wished to implement these educational theories in the small school where he worked.

A diary in which he wrote the principles of his educational concept and its day-by-day implementation in school - was found complete and undamaged - and this diary illuminates the first progressive educational experience in Israel.[23] He decided that this small village elementary school will impart the same scope of knowledge as is taught in other elementary schools, but will be based on new teaching and learning methods, and "to the extent that external conditions will permit, will produce reading and study books for pupils, which will be the work of the pupils themselves..."[24] Idelson notes many times, in his diary, names of German educational philosophers, only few of whom, such as Charelman and Kirschensteiner, saw the need for a new education as resulting from the relationship between school and society.[25] However, even then,

influenced by the new educational approaches, a new working pattern started crystallizing at the school in Har-Tuv, the framework and theoretical background of which was formulated by Dewey several years before, as a result of the experience acquired at the laboratory school in Chicago. Dewey classified four common impulses that a child has: The social instinct as expressed in conversation personal intercourse, giving and accepting. The constructive impulse - "making", which finds expression first in play, in movement, gesture, and make believe, and then becomes more definite, and seeks outlet in shaping materials into tangible forms and permanent embodiment. The instinct of investigation seems to grow out of the combination of the constructive and conversational impulses, as also does the expressive impulse or art instinct.[26] The child's active growth, and the teacher's ability to direct that growth, are conditioned by the cultivation of these four impulses, which Dewey defined as the child's natural qualities.[27] Idelson does not mention Dewey in his diary, but the working pattern in his school is interestingly based on the cultivation of these impulses, and his descriptions remind us of those which Dewey described in his book "School and Society". Idelson writes: "The locust, which destroyed the almond vines in the village and on the farm, supplied us with material for many conversations. While fighting the locust, we visited the almonds to help in the war. These wars caused the children to ask many questions, and they did not refrain from stating their opinions and finding solutions to the questions. The conversation became more and more concentrated. Finally, I realized what the general subject was: the almond. They spoke of parts of the fruit. The types: bitter-sweet, round-long. Some more similar concepts were clarified. They did not

forget, of course, the value of planting an almond, and the terrible damage that the locust causes. They reached the question of picking the fruit... They were interested in how the fruit was picked when the tree was too high. We found a ladder, and also a long stick, which would help us in this work. They made use of this opportunity to draw pictures of trees, baskets full of almonds, a ladder leaning on a tree, a child climbing a tree without a ladder. They also made up logical and graded exercises, such as: A farmer going out to the vineyard, taking with him a ladder and baskets, the workers are going out with him, he places the ladder next to the tree, climbs and picks almonds. The workers are putting the almonds in the baskets. The baskets are brought to the cart and placed inside the cart. They are taken home, etc. In this context they drew pictures of a cart being pulled by a horse, and a child dragging a small cart. They wrote on the ABC crate the words: cart, almond, stick, ladder, ribbon, horse, child. They composed sentences such as: A child is leading a cart, the horse is pulling the cart, a child is climbing a tree, etc. They made paper baskets and after some more of these easy tasks our conversation was finished...[28] This pattern repeats itself several times. Idelson summarized this method of working with the children in the same terms that were used by Dewey: "Children's education must be based on the principle of the child doing his own work at the pace of his own gradual psychic development".[29] Moreover, he added that the child's soul demands perfection, which is achieved through negotiation, because the child is capable of absorbing into him everything that is found in his environment. The initiative must be solely given to the child, and the school will thus lead him forward towards his progress.[30] The adjustment of the child's experience to his

level of development by means of negotiation with his environment, was undoubtedly the meeting point between Idelson's experience and Dewey. Dewey refers to anthropologists who have determined that certain lines in a child's interest are identical with those of primitive life. There is a sort of natural recurrence in the child's mind of the typical activities of primitive peoples.[31] "Some of the work that has been planned for our seven year old children," writes Dewey "has the latter end in view-to utilize this interest so that it shall become a means of seeing the progress of the human race".[32]

Dewey was aware of the criticism of placing the child's impulses as a basis for education because of the concern that the child will not be able to acquire the discipline, culture and knowledge that he needs. He therefore concluded that the equipment and materials, that is to say, the child's experiencing environment, must be organized in such a way as to be able to direct his activities along certain lines in order to lead him to the final goal.[33]

The similarity between this primary Dewistic formulation and the model developed by Idelson in a small village school near Jerusalem, with the hylic theoretical background on which he tried to construct this school upon -was not yet proof of Idelson being thoroughly acquainted with Dewey's theory nor of his being influenced by him. However, this obvious similarity, and Idelson's determination to develop the progressive educational principles in a social context, which he considered to be the most appropriate educational course for the emerging society in Israel - these were the considerations which would direct him in his future work to the philosophy of J. Dewey. The attempt to imitate the German progressive educational pattern meant the

establishment of Children and Youth islands which do not wish to change the existing society nor to create a new society; Whereas following Dewey's path meant an attempt to create a new human being and a new society, these two objectives being conditioned by one another.

The Active School 1921-1923

In 1920 a general meeting of all the teachers in the Hebrew educational system was held, initiated by the Teachers Association, in order to discuss the course of national education. A small group of teachers, headed by David Idelson, presented, before the participants of this meeting, the idea of a progressive education, or active education, as it was called in Hebrew. This group complained that the elementary schools which had started to develop in the country were "alien to the child's nature, were harassing his memory with information found in books, and were not paying any attention to his life as a human being and to the natural environment surrounding him."[34] Idelson described to the committee the types of progressive schools that were at the time in existence in the world and put an emphasis on Dewey's laboratory school which he described as an "Active School" that stressed the "Principle of Activities" and the development of human culture.[35] Inspite of all the reservations expressed by the participants of the Committee against this type of school, it was decided to support its establishment as a new experiment. The initiators approached the national authorities to approve the establishment of such a school. The request contained many details pertaining to the pedagogical and social advantages of the school based on work, grounding their argument for the establishment of this school on the needs of society. "...the natural development of schools, and modern pedagogy, make it necessary to think of fundamental

changes in the objectives, forms and methods of teaching and educating in school. This arises from our aspiration to raise the teachers' material and spiritual status to a level that will enable them to lead a respectable life, in accordance with the national and moral-cultural ideal of our revival, and our belief that the needs of our nation, which is on the threshold of the new existence in our country, require of an elementary school, first and foremost to educate a generation that loves and respects work, and longs for a moral social life of creativity and work in our country..." [36]

Prior to the opening of the school, at the end of 1921, an argument broke out between its two main initiators, David Idelson and Yehuda Polany, concerning its educational approach. Each one had a different attitude to Dewey's approach. Their differences of opinion were expressed in two letters that were sent to the parents before the opening of the school, in which its pedagogical principles were declared. The principles on which they agreed upon were very clearly formulated: "We hope to slowly achieve in it (the school) the pedagogical aspirations of the best educators in Europe and America". [37] They further wrote that the method of instruction will be the so called active method, "the child will learn <u>by</u> working and <u>from</u> working, will get used to working and establish his view of the world through his participation in a way of life that is based on his own work". [38] Both work and studies, so it was determined, will always be connected and dependent on each other, studies will result from work, and vice versa". [39]

On the central issue, pertaining to the educational methods of the school there is an apparent difference in the two letters to the parents, which throws light on Dewey's influence on the two founders of

the school. The first letter to the parents reads as follows: "We will strive to create one center for all the studies and tasks, so that the pupil will be able to work towards the achievement of a clear goal, as opposed to learning each skill or subject separately and thus lacking interest in the results of his work. Based on the natural ambition in every child's soul, we will see as the core of our work the pupil's desire to thoroughly acquaint himself with his homeland as well as with the universal culture of mankind. Our pupils will be taught the same information that is imparted in others schools in the country, from these two main sources. In work that is directed towards these objectives we will try to build up our pupils affection for their country and also enforce in their development that same mental effort, thanks to which man went on to invent and improve his home, his food, his clothes and his instruments, after which he also aspired to refine his soul and its desires".[40]

In the second letter to the parents there was a variation in this context. That part of the letter read: "Most of the information that is acquired by pupils in the various Hebrew schools in Israel, will be imparted to our pupils by means of placing the history of human culture in the center of our work. We will try to teach our pupils through the execution of skills and crafts in the order of their historical occurrence and development. In this manner our pupils will also go through that same course of man's mental effort in his search, during various periods, for better and more appropriate means to improve his appearance, food, clothes and instruments. Special attention will be given to acquainting our pupils with their country through trips and travels which we will often arrange for them".[41] The differences appear

to be trivial, but the difference of wording in the second letter was reached after a fierce argument between the two men. In the second letter, emphasis was placed on the studies being based on the history of human development, whereas in the first letter this term was less committing. Polany, who preferred the term "A center for all the studies and tasks", explained this difference in his personal diary: "Will I be able to consistently base my work on John Dewey's principles?"[42] In a draft of a letter, which was apparently sent about two weeks before the opening of the school, to Zigfried Bernfeld, a progressive educationalist in Vienna, and was evidently composed by Idelson, we found, among others, the following paragraph: "The essence and ambition of the school may be found in section 3 of our second letter to the parents enclosed herewith... the above mentioned section proves that we have chosen to follow the path of the American, Dewey. We will understandably, not work according to all the details of the working program that was planned in America, but rather in the same spirit. We are not in possession of enough literature, which could have made it easier for us to find solutions to the problem which we have set out to tackle, both in theory and in practice. Would you please send us such literature, preferably in German,[43] and especially of course, the writings of Dewey and his daughter. Perhaps you could find reports of the practical experiments that were carried out in America."[44]

The Active School, was opened at the end of 1921. Already in its first year of operation it became clear that this distinction between the repetition of mankind's progress and the creation of learning and experiencing centers in school is purely theoretical, because everyone agreed on the Dewistic principle of discontinuing the dualism between

school and society. As one of the school founders wrote in his diary: "The only way of learning is to learn from life. There is no longer a need to separate school from life, nor work from education".[45] Turning to life itself, that is to say, to the school environment, is based on the child's free choice, which is an expression of the level of his psycho-physical development. This level of development assures the child's following the path of human culture and at the same time gaining experience relating to a specific environmental subject; in other words - about a specific center. However, due to theoretical differences of opinion between these two central men, as already mentioned above, hardly any pedagogical discussions took place with regard to the school's course of operation. The opponents to these discussions, Idelson being their chief spokesman, claimed that such a debate would result in a crystalization of behavioural patterns, of both pupils and teachers, which would mean coming to a standstill, whereas such a school was meant to be in a constant process of change and development. However, the routine day by day life brought about a predictable process which Dewey later described in his book "Experience and Education", which was published in 1938. When discussing the role of the teacher in the child's process of experiencing, he reaches the conclusion that the teacher must not simply create an experiencing environment and abandon the child to his impulses, but rather see himself as a more experienced person, with wider horizons, who must help his pupils by giving them advice. Such advice must not be a "mould for the casting of a ready result", but rather a point of departure which will develop into a program, as a result of the shared experience of all the participants in the learning process.[46] And indeed, when comparing the notes in the diary

of Idelson's partner, Yehuda Polany, in the first few weeks of his work, to those that were written several weeks later, it appears that the educational experience, based on the child's impulses, was directed towards the creation of a social framework which concentrated on subjects such as preparing a garden, building a dog-kennel arranging the dining-room duties, and acquiring knowledge in various spheres by means of these shared working experiences.

Throughout this whole process the outstanding feature appears to be the pragmatic approach, in the initiation of which Dewey played a central role, according to which the value of experiencing lies in the purpose which the child or group of children, wish to achieve.[47]

Towards the end of the first school year, the Active School published two documents. One, which contained the principles of the school's work, was distributed as a propaganda pamphlet among the parents in Tel Aviv. The document refers to the German model of the new education, which indicates that the writer was probably Idelson's partner, who, as already mentioned, was afraid of completely adopting the Dewistic principle and preferred to set up working centers in school, through which "the children will make progress in a gradual organic manner of development".[48] However, further in the document he describes an educational course that is based on the educational experience that is suited to the child's level of development. In October 1922, a new publication, called "The New Education", was published in Vienna, by Zigfreed Bernfeld's Institute for Child and Youth Research. This publication appeared only once, and in Hebrew. It contained a description of the Active School. In the editorial, the founders of the Active School wrote that although the school was an imitation of the new

education now current in the world, they hoped that very soon the new education in Israel will pave its own path, which will suit the needs of this reviving society, in communal and semi-communal settlements, in the kibbutzim and the cooperative settlements.[49]

This public declaration is of historical significance to the course of progressive education in Israel, and moreover, is of great importance to the subject of John Dewey's influence on this education. Up till that stage, Dewey was considered the philospher of the theoretical principle which claimed that the child's development was a recurrence of the progress of the human race. Several practical conclusions were derived from this principle: Educational experience as a way of learning, the experience being based on the mutual contact between the child and its environment, the formulation and understanding of the goals of that experience, and their implementation in the course of the educational process. Dewey's influence was now being felt on a new level, which was based on the socio-pedagogical approach of the progressive education. This approach conditioned the quality of the individual's development by that of society, and was derived from the social existence which served as a convenient and ripe ground for the absorption of educational ideas in their social context.[50] The emphasis in this approach was placed on the reciprocity in the relationship between individuals and groups, children and adults - as a continuous social process.

The similarity between the basic situation of the emerging society with which the Active School in Israel wanted to form an alliance, and the American society, which was also undergoing a process of emergence, may serve as a general explanation for Dewey's influence, at this stage, on the philosophy of the Active School group, although there were

additional reasons for wishing to form an alliance with another social group.[51] The school people were acquainted with the Israeli Labour Movement, which was considered to be progressive in its goals and a pioneer in implementing the objectives of the national revival movement. They believed that this movement would enable them to turn the progressive educational experiment into an educational movement. The associative and essential similarity between progressive concepts in education, such as active experience, based on the reciprocity between the individual and the social environment, and the new social ideals based on manual labour and social values, brought forward this alliance between the Progressive Education group and the Labour Movement in Israel.

At the end of 1923, D. Idelson published two articles in the Labour Movement periodical. One described the need of this movement to develop its own unique education,[52] and the other described the future school for workers children.[53] In these articles he tried to persuade the leaders of the Labour Movement in Israel, which became the strongest and most consolidated political framework, that an appropriate progressive education is conditional to the realization of an ideology and the assurance of its continuity. Therefore it was necessary to change the traditional educational patterns and to place the emphasis on social life instead of on studying. A social education through social life - was what Idelson's proposed.[54] In the Labour Movement school, the child will devise his creations and live his independent life as it suited him, and of his own free will, without any external necessity or compulsion. Two years before, Idelson and his friends stressed the element of work as the center of education, whereas now, with the active

school on the verge of becoming a school for workers children, the emphasis was shifted to social life. The educational experience remained the basis of the educational method, whereas the social environment was meant to constitute the framework of experience, where the patterns of life were being created. Dewey was to give this theory reasons and explanations of his own.[55]

The negotiations between the representatives of the Labour Movement and the people of the Tel Aviv Active School, lead to the signing of a written alliance between the Progressive Education group and the institutes of a social movement. Hence, at the beginning of 1929, the Active School became the first School for Workers Children in the city. In its first year of existence, it had 77 pupils, who were divided into 4 age groups , and six teachers, among whom were Idelson and Polany. It was a year of conflicts between the staff of teachers, who adhered to the philosophy of Progressive Education, and the parents, as well as the school's political authorities, who demanded to allocate regular study periods, so that the worker's children will not be inferior in their scope of knowledge to those of the capitalist.

The educational path that was paved in the school in 1924 was definitely influenced by Dewey's philosophy. The subject was no longer the principle of the child's repeating humanity's course of development, but rather the concept, according to which education is a social process, the patterns of which were determined by means of negotiations between individuals and groups, in a complete and free manner, aimed towards the realization of objectives. This school, just like in the case of the Active School, was established on the basis of an accepted philosophy, but without a clear work program.

The educational program and its patterns of life were carefully and gradually constructed, based on the experience derived from every-day life. However, in contrast to the previous school, the pupils' assembly, with the participation of the teachers, constituted the legislative framework which determined the patterns of life in the school. The free negotiation, on which Dewey had based the foundations of a democratic society, as a basis for the creation of mutual interests,[56] served, first and foremost, as a guiding line for the teachers' work. Ninety three teachers' meetings were held in the first year! However, only in very few of these meetings was the subject of studies discussed.

In one of his first meetings with the children, Idelson said: "...We, children and teachers alike, will spend all day here. We will have to care for our own needs - such as food and cleanliness, and of course, to study and work. We will set up a farm here for ourselves... You will have to care for it just as a farmer takes care of his farm... We, the teachers, as adults, will try to make it comfortable and pleasant for you. We will help you when the work becomes too difficult for you, and you will surely see to it that everything that you were asked to care for will be done in a precise and orderly manner. I also wanted to inform you that we will not punish you. There will be no punishments such as in other schools. Whoever obstructs the regulations which you yourselves had set, will not be punished by us, the teachers, but by you, the pupils. Anyone who does not listen to his friends or does not improve his bad behaviour - will be sent away from the school. Finally, I wanted to tell you that if you find anything that is inconvenient to your work or life here, or if you find that you want to improve anything that has to do with your life here - come to me. I will

always be willing to help you, advise you, and try my best to improve and to better".[57]

It didn't take long for the teachers to adopt a new method for choosing the subjects of studies. The point of departure which had previously been the shared experience, was replaced by the democratic decision in the class. This collective freedom soon became the main issue. Thus, a situation arose one day, in which one of the pupils suggested to study the biblical stories. Idelson recorded this in his diary: "First there were seven for the biblical stories and seven for free activities. At the end X changed his mind and voted for the biblical stories".[58]

The uniqueness of the school in its first year, no doubt, lies in the quality of the mutual relationships in it, and in its system of "legislating" the rules of life in the children's society: "There will be no rules. The natural way is the best way", they decided.[59] Thus, by means of negotiations, a framework of life was created: The morning hour before breakfast was dedicated to theoretical studies; after breakfast the pupils engaged in free activities - in the garden, in the workshop, in games, etc. The teachers wanted to establish a relationship of interdependence between work in the garden, kitchen and workshop, and theoretical studies as well as social life. When they taught arithmatic, for example, it had to do with expenditures in the kitchen, social discussions were related to every day problems, work and studies. Social matters and regulations were decided on in the general assembly, whereas matters pertaining to specific age groups were determined, on a daily basis, within that age group. As a matter of fact there wasn't one sphere of life that was not within the power of the children's

institutes, although the teachers did make sure to retain their influence therein.

Eleven general assembly meetings were held during the first year, in which various matters were discussed: Cleaning the school, the children's behaviour, removing a child from school because of bad behaviour, use of the school bell, etc.

This mutual relationship of pupils and teachers, was intended to establish a framework, or as Dewey put it "a variety of common interests" that would assure maximum freedom to the individual within a framework of rules and regulations that he was ready to accept, because he was a partner to their making. This was the manner in which Dewey's principles became the theoretical foundation of social education in Israel.

Towards the end of the first school year, its founders formulated its principles:

"Freedom of choice within the framework of an orderly social life, based on self-responsibility; independent work for the fulfillment of vital needs such as economy, studies, work, etc.; an energetic childhood life that was suited to the psycho-physical development of the pupils".[60] Thus, the principle of basing the child's way of life on the level of his development was guarded, within a framework supplying its own needs. The conditioning of this personal quality by the social quality enables us to assume that there was more than just an acquaintance with Dewey's theories, but rather an acceptance of his philosophy, at that stage, which was different from all the other progressives, namely in that the goal of education was to combine the child's natural development with social efficiency. The point of depature is the internal conditions

which compose the individual's personality. However, these cannot be developed unless they come in contact with the surrounding objective conditions. Social efficiency is defined by Dewey as the ability to take part in the negotiating of experience. It includes everything that makes the experience of an individual worthwhile for others, and everything that prepares the individual to take a more active part in the worthwhile experiences of others .[61] In its wider sense, social efficiency is that same "socialization of the mind which is actively concerned in making experiences more communicable in breaking down the barriers of social stratification which make individuals impervious to the interests of others."[62] Therefore, "What one is as a person is what one is as associated with others in a free give and take of intercourse".[63]

And indeed, the conclusions of the school's teachers, in its first year of existence was that "the freedom of choice and independent work are necessary basic conditions for the normal growth of initiative children.

Freedom of choice does not mean anarchy. Freedom has boundaries, and these are determined by the children with the help of the teachers, according to their common life experience".[64] The methods of achieving this were also formulated in terms that were similar to those of Dewey. "Social life involving a multitude of mutual relations: between individual to individual, individual to community, age to age, teacher to pupil - in the general social institutes, in play, in work and in study. This type of social life obliges the pupil to adapt such social virtues as order, discipline, sense of responsibility, love of truth and justice, as is required of a desirable member of society. Life in a

children's society, which offers a wide and variegated ground for work, in which the number of participants is not too small, and which does not lack neither the suitable cultural conditions nor the appropriate staff of teachers to lead them to the goal they wish to achieve - such a social life is surely a sufficient guarantee that there will not be any deficiences in the children's education and mental development, as long as these are within their physical and mental capacities".[65]

Not only the concepts binding the individual's experience with that of the group to a social process are closer to Dewey's theory than to any other progressive philosopher of that period, but also the practical application of introducing new occupations to the school, in order to independently supply their vital needs. This brought about to the conclusion that "preparing meals, working on the farm, cleaning, and building furniture and playthings - are, at this age, the best means of developing in the child a full sense of responsibility, and the awareness of the value of work and the various roles in society".[66] From Dewey's point of view these occupations make is possible for the school to take part in life, and enable the child to lead a guided life - instead of just being a place for studies, whose connection to life is distant and abstract. "It gets a chance to be a miniature community, an embryonic society. This is the fundamental fact, and from this arise continuous and orderly streams of instructions".[67]

The school was established on those foundations. The life in which it wanted to participate, in order to establish itself as a model of a society, was supposed to be found in the Labour Movement in Israel. However, as is well known, the quality of many of the progressive schools was determined by the nature of their contact with the society

they wished to serve. Schools which retained their nature as children and youth islands, without being exposed to society or trying to change it, succeeded in maintaining their educational principles, but their influence was minor, and the fact that the older teachers were replaced by new ones, resulted in their slowly fading away. Contrary to the latter, the schools that wished to leave the experimental stage and become a more massive educational movement, by linking themselves to a social movement, were obliged to compromise and show more flexibility with regard to their educational principles. These sometimes distorted the progressive principles, or brought about the rise of synthetic, but also authentic streams in that educational world.

The aspiration of the progressive educationalists in Israel to become the leaders of the Labour Movement education, caused the Tel Aviv School's first year of existence to become a period of constant conflict with the parents as well as with the represnetatives of the Labour Movement's institutes. Although the Labour Movement wishe to give the next generation a new type of education, it believed that some of the traditional educational principles, such as studies, should not be relinquished, so that the worker's child would not be inferior in his knowledge, as they put it, to the child of the capitalist. The school people, on the other hand, believed that the priority of studies over the other elements - work and social life - will undermine the pedagogical principle on which the ground for experience in the progressive schools was based. "If the teachers agree to compulsory hours (for studies), they will deny the child of his freedom of theoretical research. Thus, they will demonstrate to the child that he is free in everything except in his studies. This being the case, the

child will not show any initiative".[68] The staff of teachers fought against this orientation, and was thus destined to leave the school a year after its establishment. Idelson, faithful to his educational outlook, went to Kibbutz Beit Alpha, at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, and there, together with the kibbutz members, established a children and youth society within the framework of a boarding school. He was obliged to find a common path with the kibbutz members who saw the new education as a continuation of the free youth movement which had developed in Europe. Because of this crossing, and the existing conditions in that society, which was just at the beginning of the road, the first stage of Dewey's influence on progressive education in Israel had come to an end.

In 1929 the children's society at the foot of mt. Gilboa broke up and Idelson returned to visit Germany. In 1930, disappointed by what had happened to progressive education in Germany, he declared that "all the innovators have disappeared. Each of them became wrapped up in himself, shrank, and began looking for ways of survival".[69] At the same time, he, too, began searching for a new road, and entered what he called "a studying analysis". His conclusion was "that this was the only thing that could still arouse any interest". Although it did not solve all the educational problems that came up, a great many of them could find their solution in this deep psychology that was searching after the reasons - which was psychoanalysis".[70]

The experiments created by Idelson, Polany and their friends, went through processes of transition as a result of their cooperation with the Labour Movement. However, they turned out to be the educational foundations of that movement, with Dewey's spirit prevailing in them. His influence was renewed, in a cognitive manner, with the development

of the kibbutz education, when he was better known, and when central figures in this education saw Dewey's educational philosophy as their guide and model.

Notes

In part of the sources, the dates that appear are those of the Hebrew Calender. This calender does not always coincide with the general (Gregorian) calender and it was therefore difficult to refer to the exact general dates. In these cases we only noted the number of the Hebrew month and the year.

1. I.L. Kandel, "John Dewey's Influence on Education in Foreign Lands" in: John Dewey: The Man and His Philosophy, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930, pp. 65-74.
2. William W. Brickman, "John Dewey's Foreign Reputation as an Educator", School and Society, vol. 70, no. 1818, October 1949, pp. 257-265.
3. A. Harry Passow, "John Dewey's Influence on Education around the World", Teachers College Record, Volume 83, Number 3, Spring 1982.
4. Brickman, op cit
5. Ibid
6. Ibid
7. Passow, Op cit. p. 402
8. Mark Beach, "History of Education", Review of Educational Research, vol. 39, no. 5.
9. William W. Brickman Educational Historiography: Tradition, Theory and Technique. Emeritus, Inc. Publisher, Cherry Hill, N.J. (revised edition 1982), p. 138.
10. John Dewey, Experience and Education, New York, The Macmillan Company 1938 (Reprinted April 1947) pp. 5-6.

11. John Dewey, The School and Society. Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press, 1900 (Revised Edition 1943) pp. 38.

12. In places where the connection to the society surrounding the school was of secondary importance, and in which the success of the educational method depended entirely on the personality of the person heading it - the progressive schools were considered "Children and Youth Islands". These schools started disappearing when the generation of teachers was replaced by others.

13. The Labour Movement in Israel may serve as an example of the historical alliance between the progressive education and a society in a state of emergence. See: Shimon Reshef. "Progressive Education in Pre-State Israeli Society, 1915-1939. Paedagogica Historica XX/1 Gent, 1980, pp. 153-171.

14. Ibid

15. To the issue regarding the role of the past in the educational process, i.e. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, New York, The Macmillan Company 1916, chapter VI.

16. German and French philanthropic societies established in Israel, at the beginning of the century, schools that taught in German and French. The stuggle for a national school was concentrated on Hebrew being the language of instruction. This conflict between the two trends came to an end in 1914, when many Jewish teachers abandoned the philanthropic schools, and under the leadership of the Teachers' Association and the aid of the Zionist Organization, established national schools in which the language of teaching and learning was Hebrew.

17. Shimon Reshef, Op. cit.

18. P. Aurbach - "The Element of Work in School" "Ha'hinuch" (Education vol. I, 1910-1911.

19. Ibid

20. Ibid

21. Ibid

22. Ibid

Anyone reading Dewey's later writings may be surprised by this evaluation because Dewey, contrary to other progressives, kept warning against the progressive approach becoming an orthodoxy, as did the traditional education. See: John Dewey, Experience and Education Chapter I.

23. David Idelson: Working Diary in Har-Tuv, 1915-1916 hence: The Diary. The Aviezer Yellin Archives for Jewish Education, Tel Aviv University. Hence: A.J.E. A-61 5.201/ i54.

24. Ibid p. IV.

25. Charleman and Kirschensteiner were two of the leaders of the new education in Germany at the beginning of the century. Charleman preached for "chance instruction" in which the content of the child's studies must be derived from his experiences and impressions. Like Dewey, Kirchensteiner centralized the socio-pedagogical approach, in which the educational experience occurs within a social framework, and for the purpose of materializing that framework. Unlike Dewey, he spoke of the materialization of a moral community, made up of moral members - as the goal of education.

26. John Dewey, The School and Society, pp. 43-47.

27. Ibid p. 47.

28. D. Idelson, The Diary pp. XV-XVI.

29. Ibid, p. XVIII

30. Ibid, Ibid

31. John Dewey, The School and Society p. 48.

From here it will be understood why the stipulation, that the child in his process of development must repeat that of the human race, was attributed to Dewey.

32. Ibid, Ibid

33. Ibid p. 37.

34. David Idelson (Minutes) Teachers' Meeting in Israel. A.J.E. 9.147/387, 12th Hebrew month, 1920.

35. Ibid

"...It is interesting to note, in this case, John Dewey's American Active School, which stressed the Principle of Activities, and places in the center of all its work the development of human culture, relying on what was long ago recognized - namely, that the child in his development treads the same road as did the whole human race".

36. A letter to the Educational Committee (Va'ad Ha'hinuch) regarding the establishment of the Active School, A.J.E. 5.185/2044 34-A.

37. Arrangement of the SChool and Terms of Admission (Letter to the Parents no. 1) 11th Hebrew month 1921. A.J.E. 5.185/2048 34-A.

38. Ibid

39. Letter to the Parents No. 2 A.J.E. 5.185/2048.

40. Arrangement of the School and Terms of Admission.

41. Letter to the Parents No. 2.

42. Yehuda Polany, Personal Diary A.J.E. 5.181/2037, 12th month 1921.

43. This was because of their command of the German Language.

44. A draft of a letter to Zigfried Bernfeld in Vienna, one of the leaders of the new education in Austria, who among others established the Children's Village in Baumgarten (?) in which children, orphans of World War I, were educated. A.J.E. 5.175/2013 34-A.

45. David Idelson. "Short Time and Weariness". A.J.E. 5.181/2039.

46. John Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 85.

47. In this matter, the founders of the Active School determined that the element of Activities, is based, among others, on recognition of the goal of human experience. See: Letter to the Parents no. 2.

48. Kindergarten and Private Active School. (Children's Community). A.J.E. 5.185/2044 34-A.

49. Ha-Hinuch Ha-Hadash (The New Education) Vienna: Institute for Research on Childhood and Youth. The first- and only- issue was published in October 1922.

50. Pertaining to the educational goals from the individual and social point of view, see: John Dewey, Democracy and Education chapters IX-X.

51. It became clear that a private school could not, at that time, bear the financial burden. The advantage of its being a private school was neutralized by the disagreement between its central figures on basic principle issues, and by the constant interference of parents who demanded that their children be taught the same things that were being taught in regular schools and within the framework of compulsory studies. The parents' impatience determined, to quite an extent, the quality of cooperation between them and various progressive schools in the world, and the latter's fate.

52. David Idelson. "The worker and the Question of his Children's Education". Pamphlet no. 123, vol. 7, 1933.

53. D. Idelson "A School of Worker's Children", Pinkas vol. III, no. 8, 1933.

54. D. Idelson "The Worker and the Question of his Children's Education".

55. John Dewey. Experience and Education, Chapter III.

56. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, Chapter VII.

57. D. Idelson. School Working Diary 1924 A.J.E. 5.177/2022 34-A. As in other progressive schools in the world, here too, many pupils asked to choose what their teachers wished to postpone at the first stage - namely, to study, and usually in the conventional methods.

58. Ibid

59. Ahuva Hutner - School Working Diary 1924 A.J.E. 5.177/2022 34-A.

60. School for Worker's Children (Short Review) A.J.E. 5.177/2021.

61. John Dewey, Democracy and Education Chapter IX, p. 141.

62. Ibid, Ibid

63. Ibid , p. 143.

64. School for Worker's Children (Short Review) A.J.E. 5.177/2021.

65. Ibid

66. Ibid

67. John Dewey. The School and Society p. 18.

68. Y. Polany, Minutes of the Teachers Meeting at the School, Meeting 28, 4th month, 1924. A.J.E. 5.177/2017 A-34.

69. A Letter from Idelson to Polany, 27.6.1930, 34-A, A.J.E. 5.184/2041.

70. Ibid